



Talking Through Our Bodies

Draping with a moving subject as a fashion design process

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Abstract

This thesis explores the potential of draping with a moving subject as a fashion design process, both through documentation of practical work and through background research. Over a period of six months I conducted a series of live draping sessions with different subjects. My observations of their spontaneous interactions with clothes, materials and other objects inspired and guided the design of a subsequent fashion collection.

Motivation for working in this way comes from an interest in using the body, combined with elements of chance, as the main drivers and origins of the design process. A live body, as a representative of an end wearer or user, is at the core of the process, guiding the design ideation from the beginning. I was interested to find out what kind of garments could be created from this dynamic, collaborative and subsequently chance-based starting point, and if it could generate new garment types or styles which are unique to this approach. The research question I endeavour to answer is: *What are the benefits and challenges of draping with a live subject as a fashion design process?*

One of the objectives was to find out how the contribution of the moving subject, in the ideation stage, alongside the input of the designer, would impact on the outcomes. I was interested in finding out if the outcomes would appear in tune with a live, moving person, not necessarily on a functional level, more in the feeling and aesthetic reflecting the spontaneous and serendipitous nature of the process.

Contextually, the thesis can be positioned as design research through practice, combining approaches from performance, choreography and user-inspired design, applied as a fashion design process. The approach also takes reference from practitioners in fine art and photography. The resulting outcomes are a collection of seven looks and an archive of documentation from the sessions. The benefits and challenges are identified based on my reflection and evaluation of the research methods, as well as the relation of the final garments to the process they derive from. The results are one possible version of what can come out of the method, however there are so many variables involved that I see this work as a starting point, with a lot of potential for further exploration and refinement.

Key words

Fashion design, performance, chance, improvisation, play, co-design, user-inspired, generative, dynamic

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1. Introduction

This thesis work explores a fashion design process where physical and documented compositions, created in live draping sessions, are used as a starting point for the designs of a fashion collection. My observations from these sessions, where a person interacts spontaneously with materials, clothes and other objects I provide, are central to the ideation and development of the subsequent fashion collection. My motivation to explore this way of working comes from an interest in dynamic and chance-based approaches to art and design, and from a preference to design pieces which steer away from standard garment archetypes, with a dynamic or unusual quality in their cut and composition. I am constantly inspired by serendipitous moments of human behaviour, body language, interactions and compositions that occur between bodies and materials, both naturally and in more constructed settings.

This work can be positioned as design research through practice, drawing from user-inspired, human-centred, generative, empathic, chance-based and co-design, as well as being an exploration into non-traditional pattern-cutting processes. It borrows methods such as improvisation from contemporary dance and choreography, performance art and photography and the method of collage from fine art. In preparation for this thesis work, practical background work was undertaken with a dancer and choreographer as the moving subject, in the year before. These sessions informed many of the practical and logistical aspects of how the work could be carried out, including the kind of directions that should be given on my part, and how to best manage and make use of the data from the sessions afterwards.

Theoretical research was found in Donatella Barbieri's (2007) cross disciplinary approach to performance design, using the body, play and intuition as the primary source for ideas, Jessica Bugg's (2014) embodied way of working, acknowledging the importance of the body in action as part of a fashion design process, and Tuuli Mattelmaki's (2005) discussion on design probes, which allow designers to design with people rather than just for them. Rickard Lindqvist's (2014) dynamic approach to pattern cutting contributes to my motivation, challenging static and traditional design processes by letting the way that fabric naturally wants to fall on a body guide the form of the garment.

Practitioners from the fields of fine art, performance and dance are referenced in relation to their influence on the work. Joan Jonas' performance works utilise play and improvisation with objects and clothing to form a narrative, Yvonne Rainer's choreographic approach had dancers discover original and intuitive movements from their own bodies rather than following existing approaches. Erwin Wurm's performative and sculptural photographic works distort the functions of clothing through dynamic interactions with moving bodies.

My objectives for this thesis work were to explore the potentials of the process as a method for fashion design, to discover what unique qualities would characterise the resulting garments, to define some guidelines, both for myself and for others, for how to best carry out the process and finally, to identify the challenges as well as the potential benefits of the process as a design method.

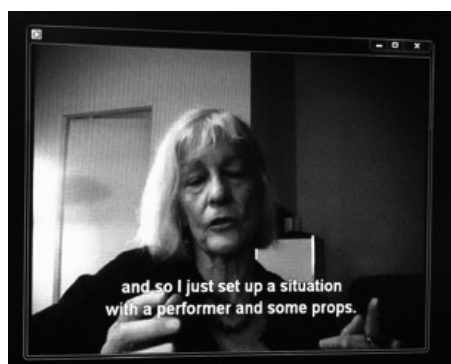
Practical research methods were undertaken in two stages. Firstly, the draping sessions with the moving subjects and secondly, my translation of the generated data as designs for a fashion collection. For the draping sessions, I arranged for a subject to interact with a set of materials I provided, as I observed and

documented. I gave loose directions to instigate movement when needed or as choreographic ideas occurred to me in response to the interactions that unfolded. A conceptual and visual theme was defined prior to the sessions, to guide the style of items and materials I provided for the subjects to interact with, and to have some consistency in the outcomes for the collection. I was interested in the aesthetic of the general public's everyday, ordinary behaviours, from my own point of view - people carrying shopping bags, waiting at a tram stop, taking off or putting on layers of clothing. I was also interested in referencing functionality on a basic and elemental level, as I thought it would be an interesting contrast to put highly logical elements through this playful, intuitive, potentially abstracting process. I arrived at a visual theme taking reference from utilitarian garments and accessories and trims - 20th century mens outerwear, a variety of drawstring bags I had collected over time, found sheets, T-shirts and knitted jumpers.

I reviewed and reflected on my approach as the process developed and gathered informal feedback from the subjects during the sessions. Working with a moving subject in the draping process and involving their input, a chance-based way of working was utilised, where I embraced accidental occurrences but was selective about which moments or compositions I wanted to later translate as design outcomes for the collection. The ideas generated in the sessions were translated into designs for the collection in various ways. Some compositions were re-created fairly directly as final garments, but in different materials. Others informed one element of a garment or were integrated across several garments in a variety of ways. The translation process involved sketching, prototyping or combining some of my original reference material with the compositions from the sessions. Whilst I did progress from session to session in terms of my understanding of the execution, it was not necessarily a linear process. There was often a back and forth between the design development stage and the draping.

One of the main challenges was in the choices associated with the planning and the set up of the sessions, and then in the interpretation and translation stage, how closely or how loosely I replicated what occurs in the sessions, in the final pieces. Ultimately the work is a way of generating inspiration and design ideas for a new fashion collection. One of the challenges was knowing how much of the process I would interfere with or control, how much of my own design thinking should be applied, and how truly the final outcomes should represent the original compositions that occurred in the draping sessions. I succeeded in carrying through elements of the compositions from the draping sessions into the final looks, however if I get a chance to develop this method further in future, I would like for the outcomes to stay more true to the raw compositions that occur, without editing them so much afterwards. I think even if the result is less polished it would keep more of the spontaneous and improvised feeling I had been hoping to instil.

One of the benefits is the sense of discovery and unexpectedness in the design process, and the element of surprise for the designer. I have enjoyed developing a method which challenges traditional fashion design methods, where the resulting garments have a different relation to the body. I see this thesis work as the beginning of a longer exploration, a way of working which I plan to continue to use, trying it across different contexts and feeding in different thematic concepts. I am still curious and excited by the potentials of this way of working, and I find the actual process very stimulating. Each session brought about fulfilling results and the varying reactions and behaviours of the subjects enabled me to learn each time and find new insights. It is also important to me that process is an interesting, inspiring and enjoyable experience for the subject, which based on the feedback, it was.



2. Motivation and Background

1. Motivation

2. Personal background work

3. Theoretical background

3.1. Influences from performance

3.2. Abstractions and chance, influences from fine art
and photography

3.3. Choreographic thinking as a fashion design process

4. Positioning in design context

1. Motivation

My motivation for this thesis work comes from an instinctive desire to utilise a live body as a site for ideation in the fashion design process. I enjoy using methods which create a sense of discovery and surprise in the outcome for the designer. I instinctively feel that I personally can generate more original and meaningful designs if they derive from a process that strays from those where the designer is fully conscious and in control of the design and its relation to the body, right from the beginning.

Clothing is intrinsically bound up with the body.
(Bugg, 2014)

Ultimately clothes are worn by moving people, so it makes sense to me to involve a real, physical body as a critical part of the design stage. One of my motivations for using a moving subject and their input in the draping process was that it would serve as an opportunity for observation of the way individuals intuitively interact with and wear things. I want to allow the body to dictate to the design and to physically drive the composition of the garment forms. In turn, the resulting compositions are materialised reactions to an interaction between body and material. I am driven to explore fashion design methods which differ from more traditional and static approaches like draping on mannequin, metric pattern cutting or 2D sketching alone. As a designer I want to apply choreographic thinking to my approach, adding a more dynamic dimension to the process of draping.

2. Personal background work

Since my BA studies I have been passionate about involving the body as a core theme in the concept and development of fashion collections. Through this thesis work I have developed a process which relies on the body of a live, moving person as a tool in the design process.

I carried out some practical background work to test the idea of this process over the course of one year, prior to beginning the thesis work. My subject was a dancer and choreographer, Emmi. I felt that I could learn from her experience in improvised movement and choreography and how a similar approach could be applied as fashion design. The set up of the draping sessions I conducted with Emmi was similar to how I progressed with the draping sessions for this thesis. I provided her with a selection of items according to a pre-conceived theme, to intuitively interact with, while I observed and documented.

The main progression from these test sessions compared to how I carried out the more recent ones was the level of my own involvement. In the sessions with Emmi, I was only observing the potentials of the method, rather than necessarily considering it as a way of directly generating garment designs. I was allowing a constant free flow of movement, interactions and compositions to unfold, with the intention that I would later inspect and analyse the documentation and work out how it could be applied as design outcomes. I learnt some important things from the sessions with Emmi which lay the foundations for the approach explored in this thesis. What worked well was doing short, timed sessions, exploring the potential of the materials off the body as well as on, and doing some sessions with the subject's eyes closed so that they are less self conscious of their actions. The ideal situation is when the session progresses fluidly and organically and there is a good balance of my not having total control of what unfolds but at the same



Previous page: Stills from *Waltz*,
Joan Jonas, 2005

Stills from draping sessions with
Emmi, 2014

time not losing control all together. For this thesis work I was conscious of being more active and responsive to the compositions created by the subjects as they occurred, so that I was left with some concrete garment ideas and prototypes, as well as the documentation of the free-flowing process.

3. Theoretical background work

I have found aspects of this live draping process, where a moving subject interacts with their surroundings in an improvised way, used by practitioners in various creative fields. Although their objectives and focuses differ to mine, I was interested to translate their methods as a process for fashion design, and in turn, build on what they had explored. This chapter is divided in sections of performance, fine art and photography, dance and choreography, and positioning in design context. Anderson & Pantouvaki (2014) echo the notion of a blurring of disciplines regarding the body in performance, which opens up new ways for inspiration to be found and processes to be applied:

...traditional disciplinary boundaries continue to dissolve, as do the conventional conceptual boundaries between sites and sources of inspiration, expression, process, realisation...

Anderson & Pantouvaki (2014)

3.1. Influences from performance

In a paper from 2007 on *Interdisciplinary, Movement-based approaches to teaching in the field of performance design*, author Donatella Barbieri introduces her enquiry as a search for “creative approaches that engage the body as the primary source in the creative process”. Reporting on a workshop she attended called *Laboratoire d’Etude do Mouvement* held over two weeks in London in 2005, Barbieri’s insights help me to contextualise the design approach I have explored. Though her reflections are from the perspective of performance design, I was able to apply the insights to a fashion design context, extracting data from what unfolds and translating it as a fashion product, rather than the outcome being performance, scenography or costume. An essential dimension of the activities explored in the workshop was the idea of play, as a response to the project briefs.

Barbieri reflects on the participants playing through the manipulation of material, using space and movement. The process encouraged openness, curiosity and learning by doing. Participants were encouraged to forget what they knew and instead be guided by instinct and intuition (Barbieri, 2007). One of the directions I always gave when briefing my subjects was to just use their intuition. I hoped this would contribute to achieving one of my aims, of the resulting garments aligning intuitively with a moving human body, potentially more-so or in a different way, than those developed with traditional 2D methods.

I wanted the style of the interactions generated through this process to be very informal and relaxed, mimicking the rhythm of everyday movements, rather than being theatrical in any way. I referenced the style of Finnish artist Anneli Nygren's *Laundry-work* (1992), a video work where the subject goes through her laundry and describes each piece in detail, based on Yoko Ono's directional *Laundry Piece* (1963). The video is intentionally mundane in its style and execution and also has an element of dry humour which is something I identified with for the style and aesthetic of this thesis work. This also informed the thematic aesthetic of the items I brought in to the sessions. From here the title of the fashion collection, *This Is One Of My Favourite Towels*, was born, a quote from the subject in Nygren's video work. The sense of elevating ordinary everyday items, tasks and behaviours came to characterise this thesis work, the essence of this is captured quite well in *Laundry-work*.



Stills from *Laundry-work*,
Anneli Nygren, 1992.

I was interested to find out if the feeling of improvisation and movement could remain in the final garments that resulted from using this method as a fashion design process. From early sessions with Emmi I could already see that some visually intriguing and unexpected things can come out of the formula of placing a person in a space and asking them to interact with a set of materials or objects intuitively. I found further inspiration in the work of American performance artist Joan Jonas, who in an interview about her video work *Waltz* (2003), explains, "I began to work the way I often do, which is just to improvise and play...and so I just set up a situation with a performer and some props." (Jonas, 2003). The piece features spontaneous occurrences and interactions with the props and the surroundings, carried out by the artist herself and other performers. Jonas' work from 1968, *Wind*, served as inspiration for the draping session I conducted outdoors, using the wind and the cold weather as active contributors to the



Still from *Wind*, 1968, Joan Jonas

compositions that occurred. The dynamic environment brought another level of unpredictability and chance into the process. Said Jonas about her work:

We played with the wind, taking our coats on and off, again and again, with some effort, while moving along the water's edge in the strong wind.
(Jonas, 2001)

UK-based fashion designer Hussein Chalayan often utilises some kind of dynamic or performative element in the composition and presentation of his collections, for example in *Afterwords*, A/W 2000, where garments are transferred from being furniture upholstery to the models' clothing in a commentary on migration and displacement, and more recently in his first self-directed dance production *Gravity Fatigue* (2015). Regarding the section of *Gravity Fatigue* titled *Elasticated Bodies*, Chalayan explained of the development:

We spoke to the cast and said this is the idea and they started to play around. There was a lot of trial and error, but we would catch moments and start to develop them.
(Chalayan, 2015)

I have applied this same approach, based on observing and catching moments, to then further develop, in how I have carried out the design process for this thesis work, however rather than the outcome being costume for a performance it is clothing for everyday life.



Gravity Fatigue, Hussein Chalayan, 2015.

Photography: Tristram Kenton,
The Guardian, 2015

3.2. Abstractions and chance, influences from photography and fine art

The design process I have been developing in this thesis and its documentation have some parallels with, and draw from, the works of fine artists and photographers, who also use elements of chance, abstractions of the body and serendipity in their processes and outcomes.

Austrian artist Erwin Wurm's style has been an influence on my working style for this thesis work, especially with how the body and clothes can be abstracted through dynamic interaction. I also referenced the realism in his photographs for the style of my own documentation.

[Wurm] fills the sweaters with human bodies; but not in an everyday functionality, rather in a functionally distorted form.
(Weibel, 2002)

Wurm's work crosses mediums with an interesting dynamic in how the documentation and content relate, described as "how sculpture can be realised as photography" (Weibel, 2002). Even though my main outcome for this thesis is not necessarily the documentation, the records from the draping sessions, whether photo or video or physical compositions, are integral parts of the process.

Many of the items I provided for my subjects to interact with in the draping sessions were existing clothes, with the intention to distort their intended functions and explore their forms in relation to a live, dynamic body. Clemens Thornquist interprets Wurm's work from a fashion design perspective:

In a series of experiments, the work breaks down given definitions of garments through its dynamic interaction with the body. As such, it presents an alternative perspective on a particular garment and its relationship to the body while, at the same time, questioning the existing definitions of different garments.
(Wurm et al. 2004, cited by Thornquist)

In the exhibition *A Bone In The Cheese* by Paris-based American artist Will Benedict at Bortolami gallery in New York in 2015, mixed media works with collaborator Tom Humphrys depict snapshots of people going about their days. The highly realistic and mundane style ties in with the aesthetic I was aiming for with my initial visual research, the ingredients in the draping sessions and their documentation. The paintings depict a single moment in the individuals' actions, or behaviours, and I am interested in and inspired by the compositions between bodies and materials in these moments. In many of the paintings, the subjects are carrying shopping bags or backpacks, purses or phones. They are visually isolated from the surrounding environments, allowing the audience to focus on the figures alone. The way that people carry things is something that became of interest to me during the development of this work, as it opens up a vast potential of interactions in extension to clothing worn on the body, creating more dynamic and abstract compositions, which arise spontaneously as we go about our days, though often emerging out of functional necessity.

The photography of Mark Borthwick is another reference point for my documentation work, for its sequential, serendipitous style. Like in Wurm's work, bodies and materials often become abstracted through intimate time-based interactions, captured as they naturally unfold. Borthwick's passionate preference



Erwin Wurm, *Wrong/Right*, 1996

for film photography over digital stems from a desire to relinquish total control of the outcome, an attitude I which has driven this thesis work, in terms of sharing control of part of the design ideation process with the moving subject.

It's trying to opportune a little voice in myself where I let go of control of the image and let things happen. I think that's something that has happened with visual photography, it's become so controlled. (Borthwick, 2009)

Borthwick's aesthetic and philosophy also ties in with the conceptual theme of this thesis work, in the sense of elevating everyday found moments,

I'll always be photographing the cracks in the street because I see so much life in these little mundane places. (Borthwick, 2009)

The process behind some of the works of surrealist artist Hans Arp is something I have tried to apply in my draping sessions. The work *Collage according to the laws of chance*, 1916, is an example of Arp's embracing chance as part of his working method, and similarly to Borthwick, intentionally letting go of control of the outcome:



Untitled, Will Benedict, 2015.



Day dreaming, Mark Borthwick, 1996

...the papers were glued where they had been allowed to fall... the discovery of this technique...grew out of frustration at composing by more orthodox methods. Arp simply tore up the work and threw it on the ground, later finding in the random arrangement a freer and more suggestive method that dispensed with the dexterity and judgements of the finely tuned eye of the artist.
(Gale, 1997)

I wanted to make use of the pure physicality of the body and the movements it can produce within itself, as a design tool. Yves Klein was another artist who made use of live dynamic bodies in his creative process. There is however more of an immediacy in Klein's work than in how the work for this thesis has been developed, with his works going directly from the process stage to finished stage, without any post-development. Goldberg (1988) recalls his monochrome paintings created from 'immediate experience', with models as "living brushes". Through my own work I am trying to build on the way that Klein sets up the situation for his process to occur, then stands back and observes while the dynamic body creates the work in front of him.

The work finished itself there in front of me with the complete collaboration of the model.
(Klein, cited by Goldberg, 1988)

It was important to Klein that his process was clearly evident and readable in the final works, referring to the paint markings as "spiritual marks of captured moments." (Goldberg 1988). In the same way, I hoped that something of the process would be evident in my final outcomes, though these outcomes would not come as directly from the process as Klein's.

3.3. Choreographic thinking as a fashion design process

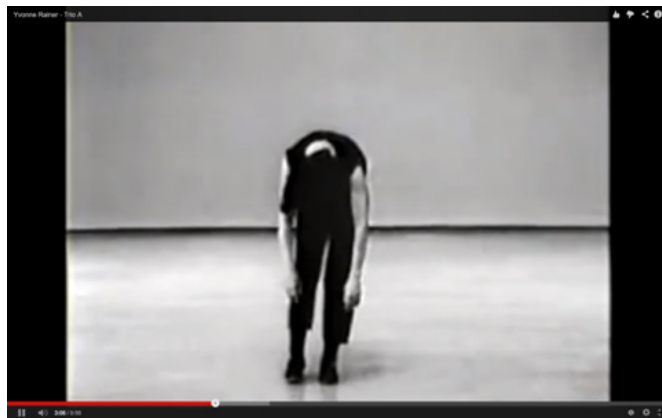
I have always been very inspired by dance and choreography, and there are several practitioners from these fields whose approaches correlate to the way I carried out the draping sessions for this thesis work. This is how I applied choreographic thinking to the fashion design process. Experimental musician and artist John

Cage played with elements of chance in his collaborative works with choreographer Merce Cunningham and set designer Robert Rauschenberg. In *Variations V*, 1965 “it’s script was written *after* the performance by chance methods” (Goldberg 1988). This aligns well with my way of working in the sense that the performative and chance-based elements are used as part of the creative and developmental process, rather than it being the outcome. Cage’s explorations with materials and chance influenced dancers of the time, for example, Yvonne Rainer, who in turn has been an influence of mine even before this thesis work.

New approaches to dance in the 1950s were picked up by Rainer, with the philosophy of “dance as a way of life, that uses everyday activities such as walking, eating, bathing and touching...to explore unusual choreographic ideas” (Goldberg, 1988). Goldberg describes this choreographic style as inspired by or based on “task-like” activities, and as utilising the “found” movements of dancers. This aligns with the approach of Chalayan’s dynamic costume design process, and it is something I have also tried to apply when picking out the moments and compositions from the sessions to be translated as garments for the collection. I was in a way discovering these compositions as they unfolded in front of me, picking out and pulling together bits and pieces that interested me or which effectively communicated the visual style of the collection themes.

Through this thesis I have attempted to apply this same kind of thinking to a fashion design process, in an attempt to create work using both chance and collaboration, taking inspiration and reference from ordinary, intuitive human behaviours in the formulation of the work.

Yvonne Rainer’s pioneering approach fuels my motivation for this way of working. Through this work, I was seeking to find out how materials and garments can be formed on a body, based on moments of their actual interaction, rather than being limited to static and logical methods:



Stills from *Trio A*, Yvonne Rainer, 1966





Ann Halprin, *Parades and Changes*, 1964

Using improvisation “to find out what *our* bodies could do, not learning somebody else’s pattern or technique.”

(Yvonne Rainer, cited by Goldberg 1988)

...Rainer emphasised the object quality of the dancer’s body when she said that she wished to use the body “so that it could be handled like an object, picked up and carried...

(Goldberg, 1988)

Similarly to the models as living paintbrushes in Yves Klein’s work, this notion of the objectified body as a tool in the creative process relates quite well to my work, as I did want to process to function in a way that the subjects could be anonymous and interchangeable. Although each individual brought with them their unique interpretation and response to the task, there was not any pre-requisite for their experience or expertise. Whilst originally when I set out to do this work I approached Emmi because she was a dancer and choreographer and following this I approached performance artist Jenny, the further I went on the more I realised the person did not necessarily have to have a performance background. It only made it easier in terms of their ability to move dynamically and their comfort levels in front of me and the camera.

The notion of collaborating with people from other fields, or untrained in the creative fields, is something which I find quite applicable to the choice of subjects in the thesis work. I learnt that there could be value in the naivety and unexpectedness of the interpretation and response from someone without a performance or fashion background. Ann Halprin was another dancer from 1960’s era, who collaborated with dancers such as Rainer, “as well as architects, painters, sculptors and untrained people in any of those fields.” (Goldberg, 1988)

Halprin’s work, *Parades and Changes*, 1964, “allowed each performer to develop a series of separate movements that expressed their own sensory responses to light, material and space.” (Goldberg 1988). The same can be applied to the approach I have used in the thesis work, in the sense of embracing the subject’s natural response to the materials and objects I give them. The use of “straightforward physical movement in space” resonates also with Rainer’s style and with the everyday realism in Will Benedict’s paintings.

Martha Graham is a dancer and choreographer who also challenged existing methods of her time, seeking to discover movement on an elemental level.



Left and following page: Stills from *Lamentation*, Martha Graham, 1930



Left and following page: Still from *Moebius Strip*, Gilles Jobin, 2011

Graham spent her very long life studying movements and challenging accepted ideas about what dance is and what a dancer can do. (Freedman, 1998)

In her progressive work from 1930, *Lamentation*, Graham is seated for most of the performance, her costume of a tube of stretch jersey, largely defining the style of her movements. This is an early example of dance performance where the garments largely dictate the choreography of the work.

More recently in field of contemporary dance, works by Swedish choreographer, dancer and artist Mårten Spångberg and Swiss choreographer and dancer Gilles Jobin, utilise similar approaches and have aesthetic styles I identified with for the resulting fashion collection in this thesis work.

Spångberg's *The Internet* (2015) is a durational piece with three dancers, a backdrop and props such as drink bottles and clothes messily arranged around them, creating the effect of a contemporary tableau. The style of their movements is considered but nonchalant. They change clothes throughout the performance, as part of the performance, and the boundaries of stage and audience are blurred, with audience members splurred out on the floor, chatting and coming in and out as the performance unfolds.

Jobin's dance film *Moebius Strip* (2011) to me aesthetically has the feeling of a rehearsal, with all the performers dressed in outdoor sporty clothing, which they slowly precede to remove, and lay out around them in a careful composition. The camera catches dynamic moments of bodies colliding and volumes in garments shifting accordingly, creases and folds exaggerated in the theatrical stage lighting.





4. Positioning in design context

Within the design context, this thesis work can be positioned as design research through practice, touching on areas of user-inspired, human centred, generative, empathic, chance-based and co-design, as well as being an exploration into pattern-cutting processes. It borrows methods such as improvisation and collage from contemporary dance and choreography, performance art, photography and fine art.

The principles of user-centred design resonate well with the approach. The relative ease of studying people in the design process and the superior results it provides compared to what could be achieved through thinking alone (Koskinen et al. 2011) is something that has rung true for me as I carried out this work. The work is also in the same line of thinking as empathic design and the use of design probes, where subjects' intuitive and intimate responses help inform and shape design outcomes.

Mattelmäki (2005) describes the functions and intentions of design probes, much of it aligning with the way of thinking I have adopted for the practical research methods used in this thesis work. In the same way that the design probe kits which contain objects such as disposable cameras, maps and postcards are sent out to subjects to intuitively interact with, I am providing objects for my subjects to interact with in the draping sessions. One thing Mattelmäki mentions that has particular relevance is that the probes are intentionally open and vague, to inspire new possibilities rather than to bring about things that are already understood. This is also one of the main drivers for using this approach in fashion design; my desire to potentially create something unfamiliar or unexpected to myself, as the designer. Another point that resonated with this work was about the probes allowing designers to design *with* people rather than just *for* them. This is another key element in my process. There are of course many differences with the methods, the main one being that the designer or researcher is not present when the participant carries out the directions and collects the data for the probe. My subject is not necessarily representative of the end user in any way, aside from their having a body. Mattelmäki stresses that the empathic design approach focuses on users in their natural context or environments, which differs from my approach, as I have conducted most of the sessions for this thesis in constructed environments where I observe the subjects interacting with objects from a pool of my prior selection. However, I have asked them to mimic everyday movements, encouraging natural behaviour, in relation to the circumstances.

My approach is more closely aligned with studying design in a laboratory environment, as discussed by Koskinen et al (2011). The benefit of testing design on users within a laboratory is identified as being that it allows researchers and designers to isolate their subject away from their natural environment and run experiments which focus on one variable at a time, in a controlled setting. Although my sessions were carried out more in an emotional, than scientific way, I did find it more practical to document the subject in a minimal setting. Goldberg (1988) puts forward a version of a hierarchy of the components involved in the design process I was exploring, and the extent to which the surrounding space dictates the nature of what occurs, quoting American sculptor Claes Oldenburg:

The place in which the piece occurs, this large object, is part of the effect, and usually the first and most important factor determining the events (materials at hand being the second and players the third).
(Oldenburg, cited by Goldberg 1988)

I attempted to integrate some more dynamic surroundings in a few of the sessions, however this kind of approach would need further consideration and development. For the majority of the sessions I chose a setting which would not distract too much from the interaction between the subject and the materials.

The researcher manipulates the thing of interest in the lab to learn how people react to it while holding other things constant.
(Koskinen et al, 2011)

In the case of the draping sessions in this thesis work, I tried to keep the overall approach consistent, aside from small adjustments and improvements along the way, while the subjects and spaces differed. Koskinen stressed the importance of practical experimentation in design research in order to imagine possibilities in design more effectively. Exploring through practical work and gaining knowledge from studies in action is valued over making predictions based on theoretical possibilities alone.

Jessica Bugg (2014) discusses the “embodied experience of dress to inform the design and development of clothing” in her performance focused design research and practice. Bugg emphasises the benefits of integrated and embodied strategies for clothing design, providing context for my own approach in this work. She discusses the importance of these strategies for enabling “shared, cognitive, haptic and sensory exploration”, between the [wearer] and designer, which “extends a physical dialogue in and through action.” The notion of dialogue, embodiment and action, combined, is key to the design process I have chosen to work with. Echoing Koskinen et al’s argument on the advantages of practical experimentation in a design process, Bugg further targets this towards the use of “...the body as a site for the development [of] clothing.” (Bugg, 2014)

Part of my motivation to work in this way comes from an interest in creating garment forms based on an embodied process, to try and steer away from regular, standardised garment forms. Clemens Thornquist encourages approaches in fashion design which re-conceive the role of the tailor’s mannequin and its approximations of the body in the fashion design process. Aligning with Bugg’s interest in dynamic embodiment as part of the design process, Thornquist (2014) questions “the predominant static representation of the body that is taken as the base for developing traditional numeric pattern-cutting systems.” Creating patterns which strayed from traditional numeric norms was one of the outcomes I had hoped to see in the resulting garment designs, that this would naturally result from a process where the forms originated from materials interacting with a live moving body. Further fuelling my motivations, Thornquist goes on to explain that:

...issues of formal logic concern not only the form of the object or the potential form in the material, but also the form of the method applied in the exploration and development of materials. In their modules, order, emphasis, and tools, the different formal structures of design methods also affect the form of the result. Altogether, for art in general as for fashion design in particular, formal analyses of causal relationships between method and results are therefore an obvious problem area to explore and develop.
(Thornquist, 2014)

I have for a long time found dressmaker’s mannequins, especially those without arms, a very limiting and unrealistic tool for fashion design and clothes making. Also from Thornquist:

...as a model of the human body and a pre-model for application and development in dress, the abstracted qualities of a tailor's mannequin need to be reconceived—or changed into a completely new model—in order to open up new possible expressions and functions in garment design.
(Thornquist, 2014)

I believe that working directly with a live, moving person, not just for occasional fittings but as a driver of the design process, could be step towards a new model of working. Rickard Lindqvist's kinetic pattern cutting approach also offers an alternative, which he defines as the body being dressed as both a beginning and end of his process (Lindqvist, 2014). In his paper, *The transformative cuts: new foundations in pattern cutting and approximations of the body*, 2014, Lindqvist stresses what is lost when traditional two dimensional pattern cutting methods are used, compared to what could be gained if more "bodycentric" methods were explored and adopted. In the practical exploration of his research he reflected that "an alternative relationship between body and dress appeared" in the garments that resulted from the process of materials interacting with the human body. He points to the constantly variable state of the body, something which the creation of clothing could more naturally align with through more dynamic methods.

Rather than taking the lexicon of modern dress, with its standard block patterns drawn from the tailoring matrix, as reference points for shape creation, let us look to the body itself. How does fabric behave on the body? Where does it want to go? How does it fall? What happens to the fabric when the body moves?
(Lindqvist, 2014)

Lindqvist's cutting method begins with draping a large rectangular piece of fabric over the body, gradually sculpted by pinning, folding and finally cutting away the excess material, until the fit is as desired. On an aesthetic level, the result doesn't stray too far from regular garments, the difference is in the dynamically placed seam lines and in the fact that the garments are largely made of one pattern piece, which wraps around the body. While the approach I have used for this thesis work is less calculated and more playful, abstract and serendipitous, I am inspired by the emphasis on using the physical body in the design process of Lindqvist's work.



3. Objectives and Research Methods

1. Objectives

2. Research methods

2.1. Introduction to draping sessions

2.2. Visual and thematic research

3. Detailed report on draping sessions

3.1. Matti

3.2. Aamu

3.3. Laura

3.4. Nkumbu

3.5. Petra

4. Translation of generated data as design outcomes

1. Objectives

There were two main objectives for this thesis work. Firstly, to develop a live draping method where the subject and designer share control of the process and secondly, to create a fashion collection using the method. In carrying these through, I want to define the benefits and challenges of combining the methodologies from performance, fine art and user inspired design as a fashion design process.

In the translation from the process work to the outcomes, I wanted to capture and recreate the essence of motion in the folds that occur during the wear or interaction with materials when they are in a dynamic, free-flowing state, as well as the haphazard placement of the elements which make up the garments.

I hoped to develop a method where the design process is not entirely controlled by the myself, the designer, as a means to achieve a more fluid, unexpected result in my garment designs compared to what I could normally achieve through draping on a static mannequin or through 2D sketching alone. I want to let the process guide the outcome, embracing a sense of discovery. American visual artist and collaborator of John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, said of his approach in a recent BBC documentary (Robert Rauschenberg - Pop Art Pioneer, 2016):

I'm not interested in doing what I know I can do or what I think I can do.
(Rauschenberg, 2016)

I was also interested to explore this method as an artistic outcome in itself, so naturally not everything that occurred during the practical research was utilised towards garments for the resulting fashion collection. A secondary objective was to keep an archive of documentation, which can potentially be used to inform future collections.

I hope that my reporting of the method through this thesis will make it applicable for other designers, in a variety of fields.

2. Research methods

Design research for this thesis was carried out through practice. Firstly in the draping sessions conducted with moving subjects and then in the translation of the generated data as a fashion collection. These methods allowed me to develop and test out the process from beginning to end, enabling me to answer the research question.

2.1. Introduction to draping sessions

Preparation for the draping sessions involved my selecting a series of materials and objects which related to the pre-defined theme of the fashion collection, choosing a space and time, and then a subject. I always prepared the subjects beforehand, giving them the background and explaining the motivations behind the work, and what I expected from their participation on a practical level. The selection of subjects was quite organic. After the background work with choreographer Emmi, I enlisted performance artist Jenny, as initially I felt that someone with a performance background would take easier to the task. Eventually my subjects were made up of my peers, some who came to me and some who I approached.

Once I had arranged all of the components, I directed the subjects, each in individual sessions, to interact with items intuitively.

I developed and refined the structures of the sessions as I progressed with them, so that they became more focused each time. In general they would begin with the subject inspecting the components I had provided, selecting and interacting with a set of items, in whichever combinations they choose, removing or adding things as they went. This was followed by their interaction with combinations I have pre-selected, but still based on their own intuitive responses. While the subject explored compositions of the materials in relation to their body and to the surrounding space, I observed and interjected at any time when I noticed something interesting happening. I could fasten the composition in place so it could later serve as a physical sketch or prototype, or if some action triggered a choreographic idea from me, I would direct the subject accordingly.

Making a rough plan before the session made it easier to achieve or explore any specific objectives I had in mind for that session, even if I couldn't fully know or control what would come out of it. Setting some rules or guidelines, such as limiting the amount of items that can be used by the subject at one time from between one to three, is also helpful in clarifying the outcomes and preventing the compositions from becoming too messy or busy.

I had a video camera on a tripod set up for most of the sessions, to have a complete documentation of what unfolded to refer back to, however I also found that taking photos of interesting moments as they came up, from a variety of angles, was an equal if not more effective means of documentation. The silhouettes, combinations and compositions of these moments, as well as any prototypes that resulted, would form the basis of the garment designs for the collection.

I took constant, informal feedback from the subjects during the sessions, to get an understanding of the experience from their perspective and better develop it in an informed way. Their contributions to how the process unfolded were extremely valuable.

There were some variations with the method that were tried or ideated, during the sessions. For example, having a segment with the camera off, my leaving the room, me swapping places with the subject so I would do the draping and they would observe, or asking the subject to provide some of the materials rather than me dictating that part. In some cases the same materials or objects were given to different subjects in separate sessions, to achieve a different version of compositions.

2.2. Visual and thematic research

The aesthetic direction and thematic references for the collection were somewhat defined prior to the draping sessions taking place, and they evolved as the sessions progressed. The concept guided what kind of ingredients I would feed into the process, and this is something that is interchangeable, depending on what theme the designer chooses to work with. The collection title, *This Is One Of My Favourite Towels*, communicates the concept of taking ordinary, utilitarian or found objects and moments and elevating them.

catching accidental moments ; in between moments ; improvised moments

compositions formed, when the subject doesn't even realise
what they're doing

outerwear underneath, a tshirt

for example, ^{the view} from the back

Time-based occurrences designs

Creating inspiration / references for myself

Someone assembling an outfit on themselves out of various garment
components and materials. - displacement

The outcome is static, the end use dictated by future wearers.

capturing gestures, positions, behaviours

Chance - styling

Creating prototypes through the method - ready-to-use

Observe someone going about their daily motions, and the compositions/
interactions that occur

Improvised performance as design process.

~~drawing attention to~~ the absence of an audience

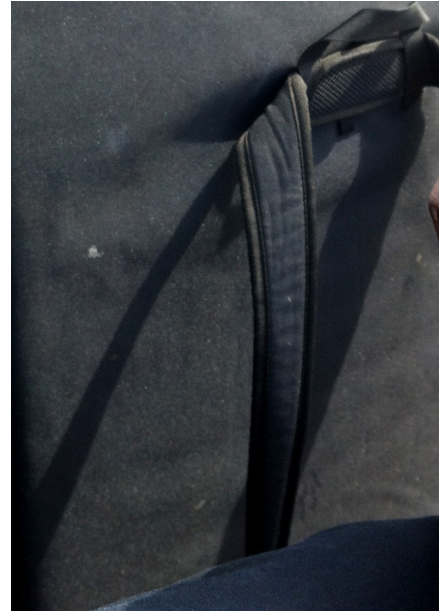
The collection concept was developed in line with the approach I have chosen for the style of movements and interactions in the draping sessions. I didn't want the subjects' movements to be theatrical, more task-like and natural, like Yvonne Rainer's approach to choreography. I took references from what I saw and experiences I had as I went about my day, rather than actively seeking out visual research on some chosen theme, because this felt like the most relevant aesthetic for the work. I also took aesthetic inspiration from some of the work of the other practitioners from my theoretical research.

Opposite: Page of notes I kept during the exploration of this thesis work.

In the past I have resisted instilling a high level of functionality or functional details in garments I design, but after coming across a book on 20th century vintage menswear garments, I was inspired by their distinctive functional elements, and thought they would juxtapose nicely with my live draping process. As a contrast to the expressive, free flowing nature of the design process I was using, I was drawn to the formal logic in the menswear garments and their details, and many of these became the archetypes upon which I built the pieces of the collection. I was interested in applying a method which would abstract and de-contextualise the garments in their original state, and in what distortions would occur. Clemens Thornquist made an interesting point about the limitations of garment archetypes in fashion design,

Furthermore, in fashion design, the archetypes of dress possess a powerful influence on the development of clothing. Looking at developments in fashion design, it seems virtually impossible to break from archetypes such as T-shirt, jeans, skirt, trench coat, jacket, sweater, etc. Yet experimental exploration and challenging of foundational definitions and archetypes is as vital to the development of fashion design as it is to the development of any other field.
(Thornquist, 2014)

I combined the visual research on the vintage menswear pieces with other physical pieces I had collected or elements I had documented. Different interpretations of functional elements were fed through the process, so that their original meaning or intended purpose was played with subverted or given new meaning. One of the main components was the drawstring bags of varying sizes, which I thought would be interesting to combine with the drawstrings in jackets, using them as garment elements or pockets rather than as separate accessories. A cheap nylon of a rain jacket casing and a disposable PVC airline toiletries bag inspired fabrics for the outerwear pieces. The dry, textured cotton of a towel, was reference in the yarns I chose for the knitwear pieces. Anneli Nygren's *Laundry-work* stayed in my mind, and other elements of laundry entered the sessions - old oversized military laundry bags, pegs used as a construction tool for temporary compositions, care labels used on the outside of the final garments explaining whose composition from the draping sessions they were based on.





100% puuvilla /

Pestävä ennen käyttöä. Pesta
tummat ja kirkasväriset pussit
nurin käännettynä. Tummille
nestemäistä pesuainetta.
Tvättas före användning. Tvätta
mörka och klarfärgade påslak
oviga sidan utåt. För mörka
rekommenderas flytande tvål





3. Detailed report on draping sessions

Draping sessions for this thesis work were conducted with seven different people over a six-month period. Here I include reports on the sessions, including some test sessions in the beginning.

3.1. Matti, test session at home, 2/10/15

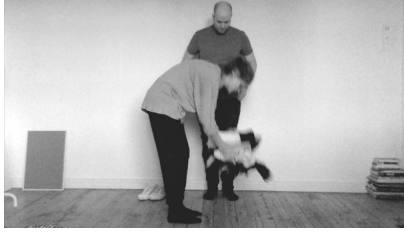
The test sessions with Matti were quite important because it was the first time I tried the process with someone other than Emmi, with someone without professional experience in performance or improvisation. Matti is a fashion designer himself, so there was not a sense of total naivete in his approach, but I learnt quite a lot in terms of the kind of directions I should give to trigger the most effective ways of interacting. The material I provided was mainly fabric off-cuts and scraps, some trims, and a t-shirt. Initially he was quite consciously trying to build a garment as he knew it - placing pieces for the back, the sleeves, the front, etc. I was interested in the outcome being more irregular, more intuitive, less structured like a familiar garment, but it took a little while to free up his reactions so that the results became a little more interesting and unexpected. In the end some interesting silhouettes and compositions emerged. One important thing I learnt was to keep the components to a minimum. One of the challenges was finding a balance between my own direction and the subject's natural reactions. I found that the choreographic direction came quite naturally as the sessions unfolded.

There were two resulting compositions which satisfied what I had hoped to achieve from the sessions, in terms of their asymmetry and the unusual combination of materials. I didn't further develop these for the collection as it felt too early in the process to arrive at final compositions, and the materials I had provided for this session were quite random, but it was a promising start. The session also taught me that the outcomes, at least in this case, were quite easily transferable from menswear to womenswear.

3.2. Aamu, two sessions in empty classroom, 5/11/15 and 12/4/15

The first full-scale draping session was with Aamu, a fashion and textile design MA student, who expressed interest in participation after I presented my thesis plan. Aamu had some experience in performance so she took to the process quite easily, naturally and enthusiastically.

The two sessions with Aamu were the source of most of the compositions that became garments in the final collection. For the first session I supplied her mainly with existing garments and accessories, the types of which had been defined by the visual research. I had prototyped two of the jackets from the vintage menswear book, so that she could begin to play with the potentials of their forms. I was open to cutting into all of the pieces being used, if it would free up the form a bit more and open up the possibility for deviations in the archetype. I also brought a selection of the drawstring bags, the idea being to combine functional garments with utilitarian accessories, the drawstring being their common element, to be played with and distorted. This was something I carried through in later sessions, to generate a variety of compositions using the same ingredients. I asked Aamu to try to limit the amount of pieces in one combination to three, to avoid it becoming too messy and difficult to read.



Previous page: reference jackets
from Vintage Menswear, 2012.

Left: Test draping sessions with
Matti at home, 2015.





In a long continuous, silent exercise,





represent the body in movement in opposition
to the still body.



In our second session I provided Aamu with some large pieces of scrap fabrics in a variety of qualities, some sheets, and pegs to fasten the pieces together. Initially I had been using pins and safety pins but found that pegs were easier for the subject to attach and detach themselves, and to fasten things temporarily. Based on reflections of earlier sessions, I tried to give more strategic directions, such as asking her to layer three materials in a way that makes her feel the most warm and comfortable, which resulted in a prototype for an asymmetrical, multi-layered coat. I tried to find a balance between documentation of free-flowing interactions, to be inspected from the documentation and developed later, and the creation of more immediate prototypes, which meant stopping the movement at a certain point and setting aside the resulting composition, to keep as a reference for a prototype.

I was conscious of the fact that Aamu, like Matti, as a designer herself would perhaps have an awareness of materials and clothing which would have too much impact on the resulting compositions, but we were able to successfully get her in the mindset of using her physical intuition, and treating the ingredients with a naive approach. She suggested that she could interact with the items as though she was an alien, seeing them for the first time. I found this to be a very effective way to articulate the attitude I was interested in for the subjects. In general it was not problematic when the individual's personal taste or preferences did come through, as this is part of the collaborative process I wanted to embrace. I didn't want my own preferences to control the input too much at this stage, but instead as the observer I could then pick and choose which moments align with what I wanted to bring to the collection.

With the documentation with Aamu I switched to relying more on the photos than the video, as I was finding that going through hours of footage was becoming tedious, and it was more efficient if I could immediately record the interesting moments, from various angles, as they occurred, asking the subject to pause in their position if necessary. Upon reflection of the compositions with Aamu, after the collection was made, there were many that I could have taken directly as they were and translated as garments, purely because of an interesting way that the fabric or a garment had been draped or combined. These will form the archive of documentation, which I can pull from for future collections.

3.3. Laura, two sessions in one day, at home and outside, 12/11/16

Two more sessions were conducted with a friend who was visiting from Melbourne, Laura. We were joined by Jeanne, another friend who was visiting, and who would photograph the sessions. There were two new variables in these sessions - having an external documenter and having more dynamic settings, my kitchen interior and the rocky landscape and the wind outside.

Although I observed the session unfolding, the captured "moments" were largely dictated by what Jeanne chose to shoot, an element which could be explored further in future, removing myself (the designer) even further from the process. Since this was a unique set up compared to the other sessions which were more laboratory-like, my intentions were not necessarily to take as many compositions or prototypes as possible, but more to explore the method in itself. I was also interested in playing with the idea of outerwear garments being worn underneath lighter garments, based on some of the compositions that had arisen in the sessions with Aamu.



Previous pages and left:
Moments from draping
sessions with Aamu in empty
room, 2015



The first session happened at home, in my messy kitchen. Laura had two t-shirts and a blanket to interact with, as she made a cup of tea. Her subsequent arrangement of two tops combined, one worn half-way off her arms, was the basis for two of the knitwear pieces in the collection. That afternoon we combined a sightseeing trip with a draping session on a windy island. Inspired by Joan Jonas' *Wind* (1960), we wanted to try and make use of the natural surroundings as agents in interaction of the body and the materials.

After receiving Jeanne's photographs from these sessions I realised it is worth having high quality documentation of the process work, not just relying on low-tech video footage and iPhone photos.



Draping session with Laura at Suomenlinna, 2015.

Opposite: Draping session with Laura in the kitchen, 2015.

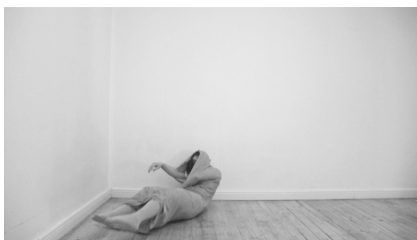
Photos: Jeanne Hendrey



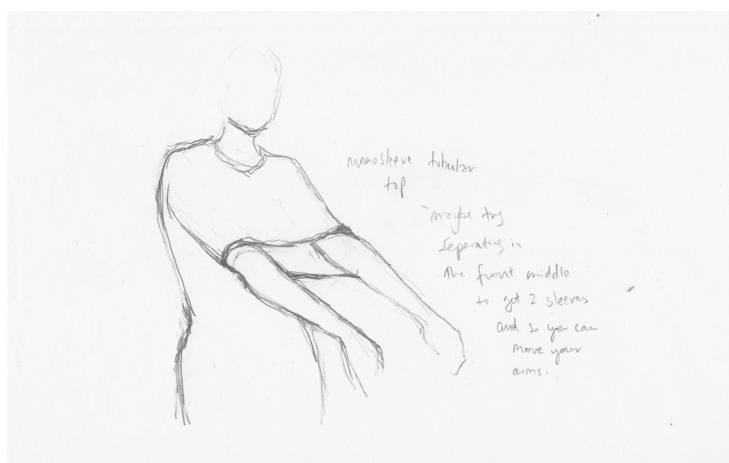
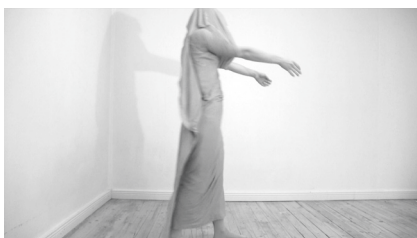




tshirt, emerging



Left and opposite: Draping session with Jenny at home, 2015



Developmental sketch for tube construction knitwear pieces, based on compositions with Laura and Jenny.



Draping session with Jenny at home, switching roles, 2015



3.4. Jenny, home, 18/12/16

Jenny is a performance and fine artist I contacted about possible collaboration in the planning stage of the thesis. I had seen some of her work, and found her calm and considered approach to performance quite suitable to the style of movements I wanted to explore in the sessions. Also, Jenny's studio was on the ground floor of my building, which was how I became aware of her work. I decided to do a session with her at my home, after the success of the first one there with Laura, however, I made the setting more minimal.

This time I was interested to try a session with large uncut pieces of fabric, alongside some bags, pockets, and knitwear pieces. One of the most interesting results for this session came when Jenny laid out a large piece of jersey on the floor and rolled herself up in it, then stood up and explored the wrapped, tube-like form further. It resonated with the costume in Martha Graham's *Lamentation*, however here it had come about spontaneously as part of a fashion design process. This arrangement informed the cut of the knitwear pieces in the collection, fused with the combinations Laura had come up with previously. Jenny's composition inspired the idea of a tube-like garment which folds over itself when the wearer places their arms down. In general this was an interesting discovery for me for something that could be further explored in terms of pattern development, as an independent course of research.

With Jenny we also tried swapping roles, where she observed and interacted with the items, however I felt that I was too conscious and aware of what I was doing, and defeated the purpose of my objectives and motivation. However, it was good to experience the process from the subject's point of view.

3.5. Nkumbu, empty classroom - 24/3/16

The session with Nkumbu, a fellow MA fashion student, was more focused than the others, because I had a specific combination of items I wanted her to interact with, to inform the design of specific garment in the collection.

I asked Nkumbu to combine an outdoor jacket with some large military laundry bags. At this stage I was steering the session and the ingredients more towards specific ideas for what was needed in the collection. My direction was like, "create a jacket composition using this jacket as a base in combination with three laundry bags."

In response to this task, Nkumbu tried something which the other subjects had not yet tried, she laid the jacket and the bags on the floor and arranged and fastened them there, before putting it all on. The resulting composition ended up being the prototype for the white nylon anorak in the collection. It was interesting that she utilised an element of chance in her assembly of the items, rather than assembling them on herself, directly.



Draping session with Nkumbu
in empty classroom, 2016



Draping session with Petra in
attic, 2016



3.6. Petra - stairway & attic - 4/1/16

The final draping session was conducted with Petra, a fellow MA student from creative sustainability. The session was again in my building, this time using the stairway and attic. I wanted to involve some more dynamic surroundings in this final session to see how it would effect the compositions. I also wanted to extend the laundry theme in the selection of the environment, making use of the clothes line in the attic as a prop in the session.

4. Translation of the generated data into garment designs

The interpretation and translation of data that arose in the draping sessions was one of the greater challenges of this thesis work. I had generated both physical prototypes which came directly from the sessions, as well as documentation of moments or compositions which had occurred during continuous movement.

The resulting collection of garments was built on a combination of these, some more obviously and more closely linked to the original moments than others. From some moments, there came two garments, the idea applied in different ways, using different materials. I didn't follow any pre-determined rules with how I would interpret the compositions, I approached it quite organically and intuitively. In line with my original theoretical and visual research, I embraced a collage approach, piecing together and overlaying moments from different sessions, with different subjects, on different garments types.

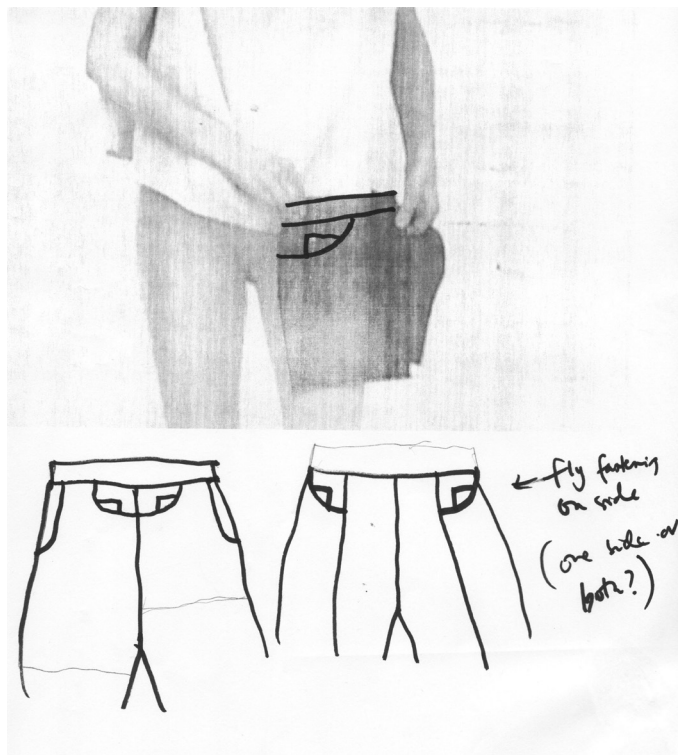
As was the case with Nkumbu and the laundry bags anorak, there was sometimes a necessary back and forth between the design stage and the draping stage, to enable progress in the development of the collection. I used functional elements to recreate certain compositions. For example with the crouched pose anorak, I recreated the creases in the sleeves and front body by implementing a curving, continuous drawstring across those parts. Some garments were designed to compliment other garments, without any direct correlation to the draping work, but linking back to the visual research alone. These included the silver skirt, which was an extension of the silver jacket and the drawstring bag PVC trousers, which were an extension of the drawstring bag/utility garment story.

The pieces that resulted have many cross overs and underlying links, for example with the knitwear pieces, I combined moments from the draping session with Jenny and Laura. The tube-like pattern which folds over itself is based on a combination of these moments, and is the basis of both CMS-knitted pieces. A moment when a sheet draped on Aamu leaving an asymmetrical opening on her back, was translated through pattern cutting into a shirt and a long hand-knitted dress.

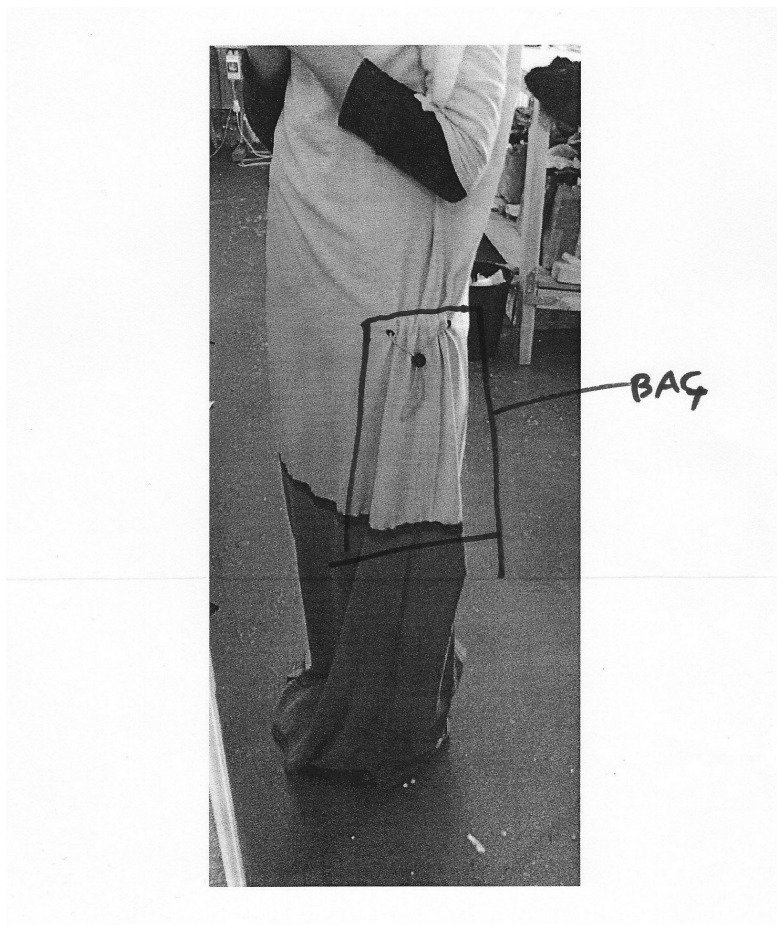
Developmental sketches based
on compositions with Aamu,
2015.



new shape with
folds removed



fly fastening
on side
(one hole or
both?)

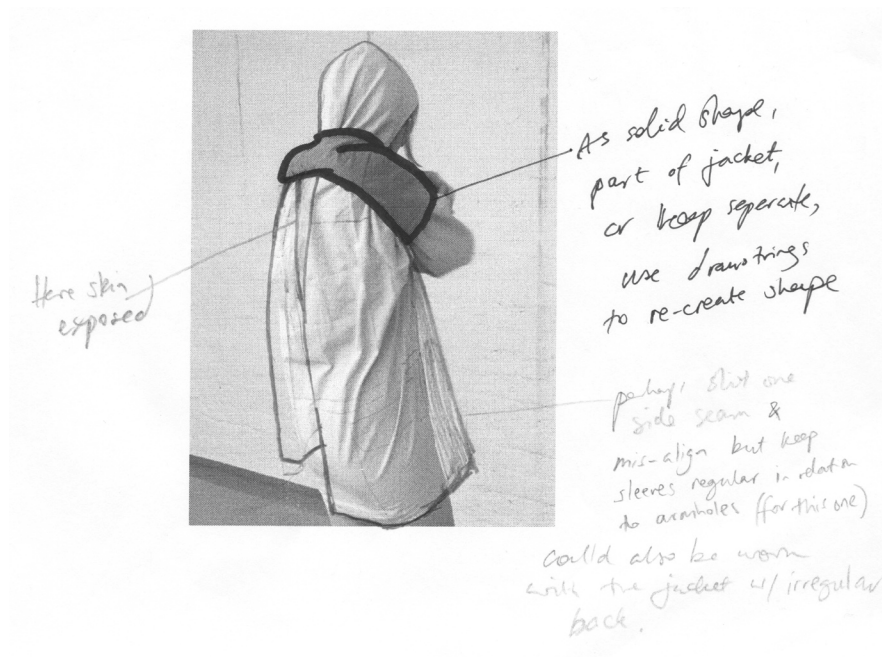


Early prototype based on combinations with bags and garments, 2015.

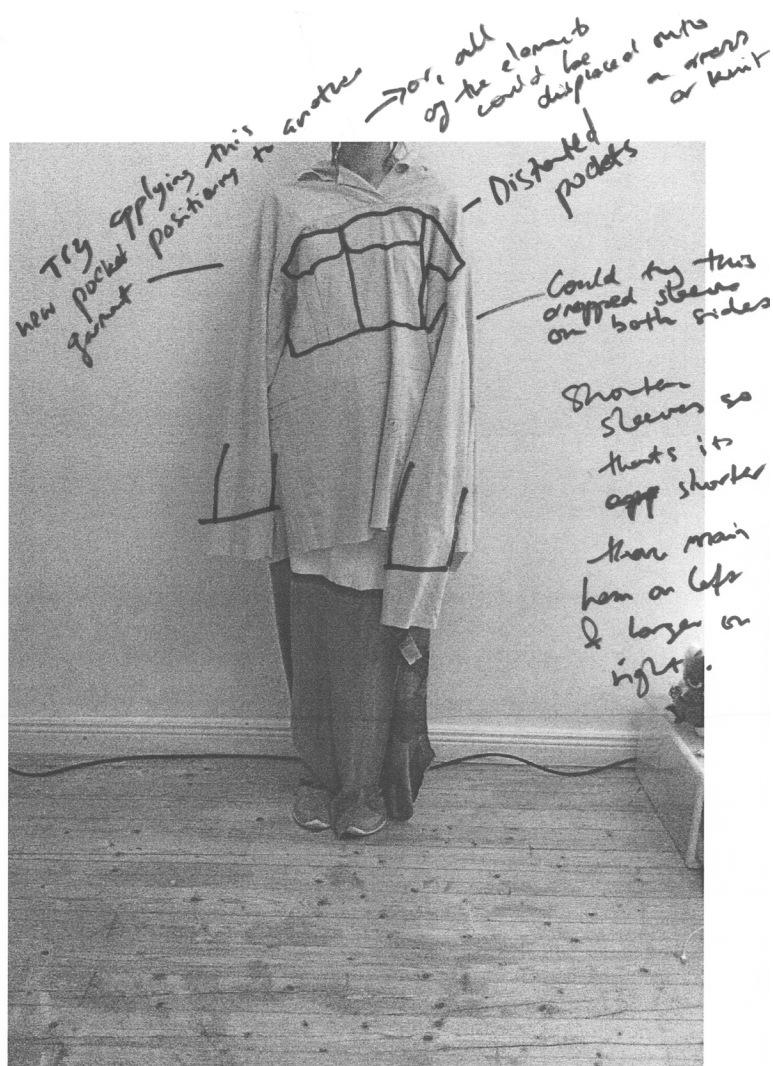
Opposite: Prototype for asymmetrical anorak, based on composition with Aamu, 2016.



Developmental line-up sketches, 2016.



Developmental sketch based on composition with Aamu, 2015



Developmental sketch on prototype for asymmetrical anorak, based on composition with Aamu, 2016.



4. Results, conclusion and discussion

1. Analysis of results
2. Summary of benefits and challenges
3. Summary of compositions translated as garments
4. *This Is One Of My Favourite Towels*, collection images
5. Conclusion
6. Discussion

1. Analysis of results and impact of moving subject on design process

The main result of the research is a detailed description and documentation of the design method I have developed for this thesis, which was used to design a fashion collection of seven looks. The collection combines utilitarian garment archetypes and accessories in abstract placements and compositions, based on my observations of the moving subjects interacting spontaneously and intuitively with materials and clothes in the draping sessions I set up. Each look in the collection correlates to a composition from the sessions, in varying degrees of accuracy and specificity.

The impact of having the subjects' moving bodies involved in the ideation process can be seen in the irregularity of the cuts and the re-interpretations of functional details. A sense of frozen movement and asymmetry is common to most of the resulting looks. For example, the silver smock with asymmetrical sleeves is a result of Aamu's undoing seams on the prototype and using the new opening as the armhole. For the laundry bag anorak I was guided by the composition with Nkumbu for the placement of the bags and their drawstrings on the jacket.

The utilitarian aspects of the garment archetypes become distorted through the draping process in some of the resulting garments. For example, in the gathered front transparent anorak. This piece recreates Aamu's crouching position whilst wearing the anorak prototype, from our first draping session. Here the folds, creases and silhouette are instilled through a curved drawstring channel which runs across the sleeves and the front of the jacket.

A construction that came out of the process which was new to me, and not familiar as an existing garment type, was based on the two tops combined composition with Laura and the tube construction based on the composition with Jenny. The pattern construction is a tube which folds over with the arms and has sleeves beginning only at the elbows. The two tops are knitted together seamlessly, in the sweater they are differentiated by different knit structures, in the dress by a change in colour.

In some instances I took one small element from a moment in the session, and applied it as a detail across different garments. For example, a moment from a session with Aamu, with the asymmetrical opening of a sheet on her back, was translated in the cut of a shirt, and a long knit dress. The angle of the opening was mimicked in the final garments by off-setting the placement of one side, more towards the front, from the shoulder line.

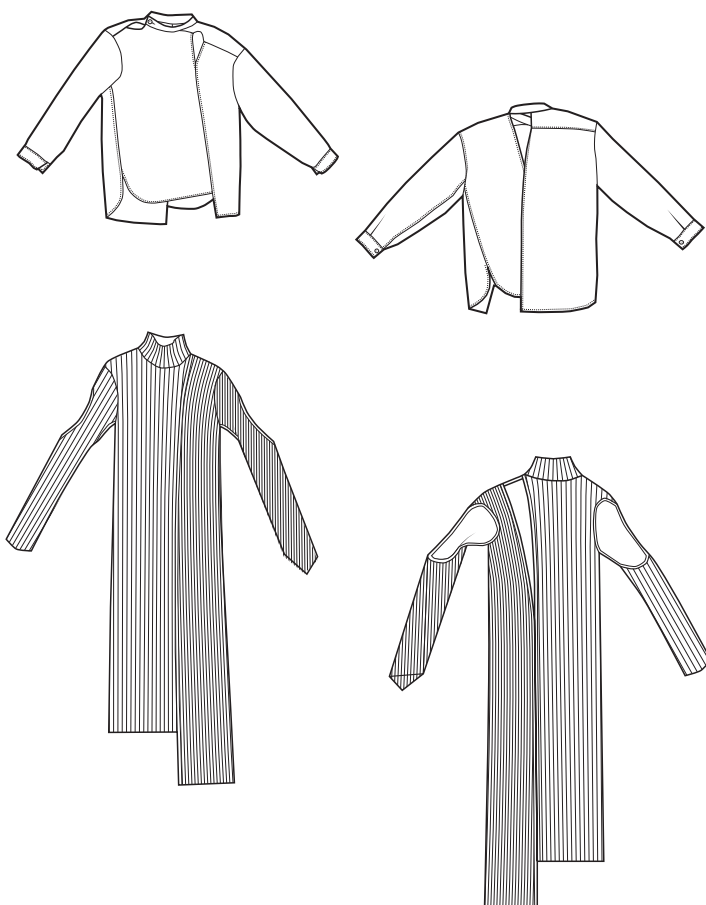
2. Summary of benefits and challenges

I am satisfied with the outcomes and with how I have been able to develop this design process for the thesis work, though there is still a lot of refining that can be done. The main challenge of working with this process lay in the openness of it. The fact that everything that occurs is open to the designer's interpretation makes it difficult to focus the results. It can also be difficult to make design decisions, because of the organic and intuitive nature, at least in the way that I have developed it for this thesis. For example it was difficult to choose which fabrics to recreate each piece in so that it would be consistent as a collection but still representative, to some extent, of the original composition. Finding this balance in general, between what occurred in the original compositions and what

becomes the collection was one of the main challenges. The main benefit of this process was the element of surprise. Regardless of what the outcomes are, one of the values for me is that the pool of ideas upon which the garments are based were not dictated by me, the designer. They came about through a collaborative design process, with the coming together of bodies and materials in space and time, only then edited by me to become looks in a fashion collection. I appreciate this aspect of the process immensely, as for me, it brings a more real, humanistic element into the process of clothes designing.



Comparison of a detail from draping session with Aamu, 2015, translated across two garment types in the collection.



3. Summary of compositions translated as garments



Gathered Front Anorak, Drawstring Bag Pants. Based on compositions with Aamu.



Laundry Bags Anorak and Laundry Bag Skirt, based on compositions with Nkumbu & Petra



Gathered Hem Shirt and Open Back Shirt, based on compositions with Aamu.



Half Off Smock, based on composition with Nkumbu.



Two Tops Combined Tube Construction Knit Dress, based on compositions with Jenny and Laura



One Arm Out Smock, based on composition with Aamu.



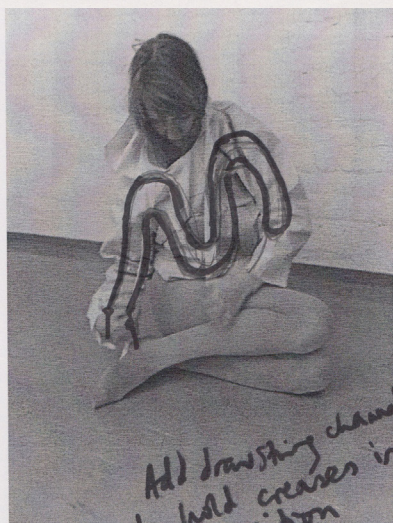
Duotone Open Back knit dress and Drawstring Bags Compilation skirt, based on compositions with Aamu.











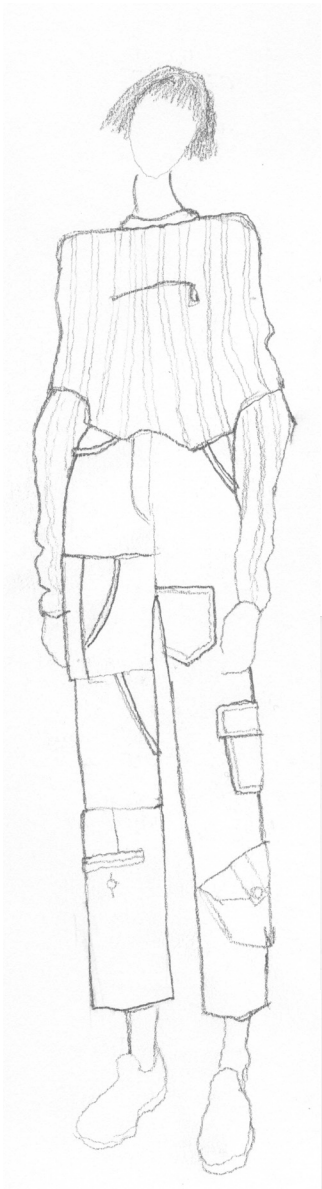
Add drawing channels
to hold creases in
the position

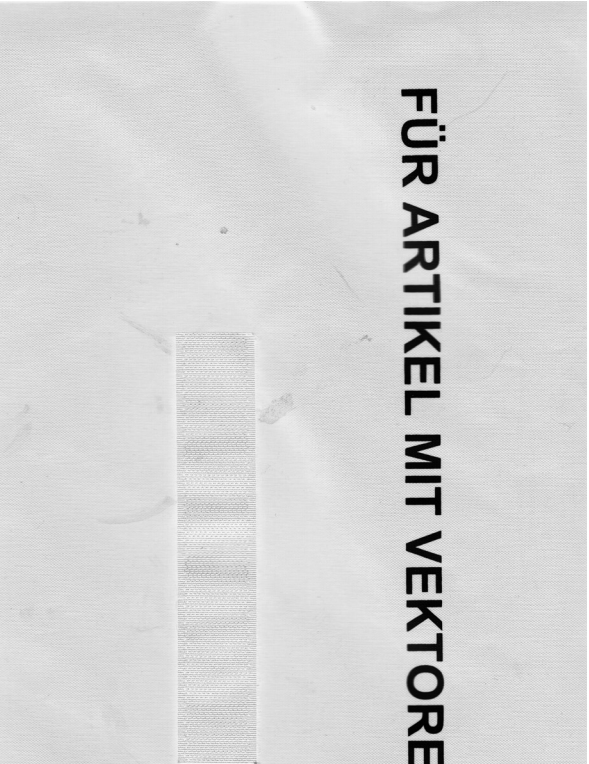






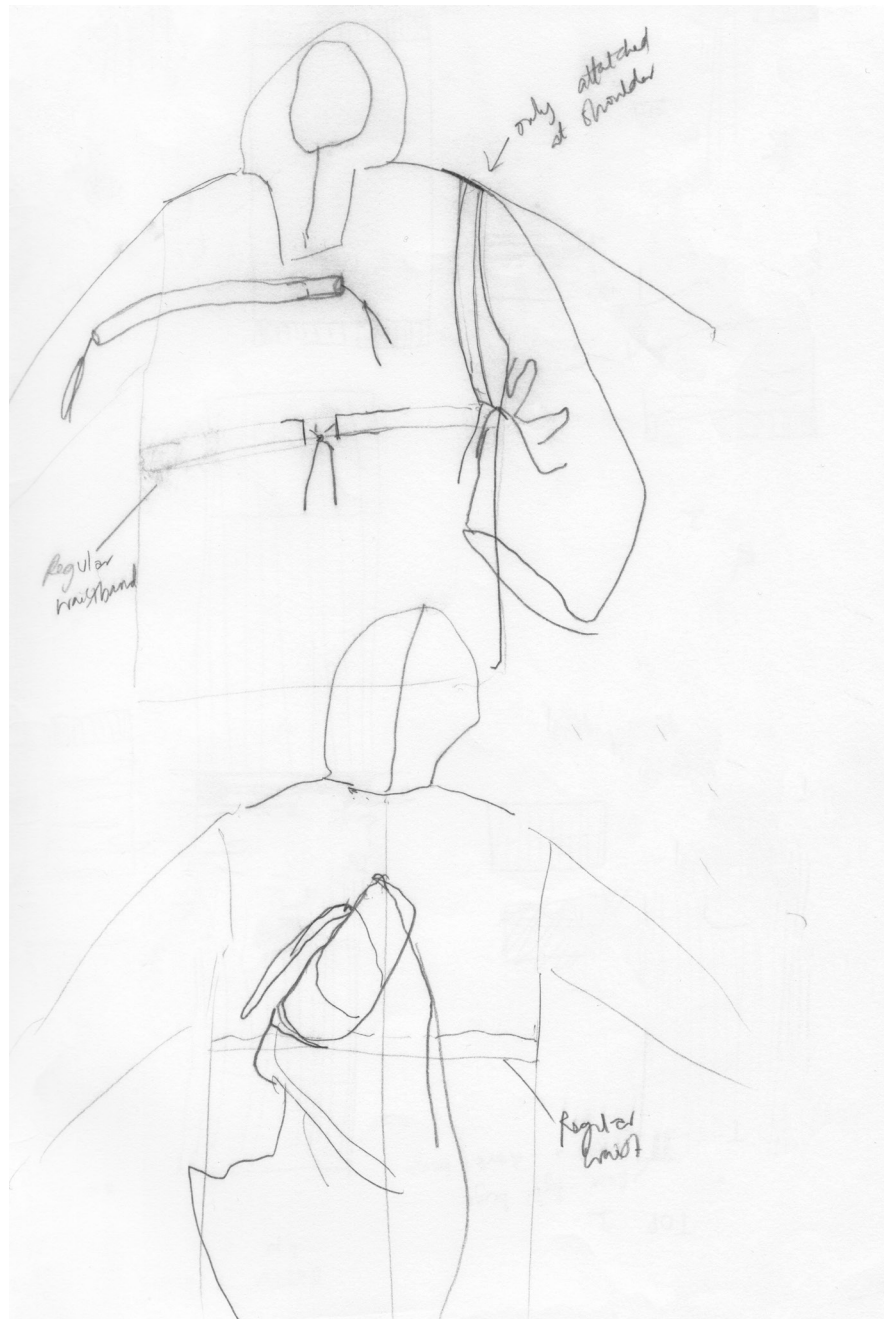












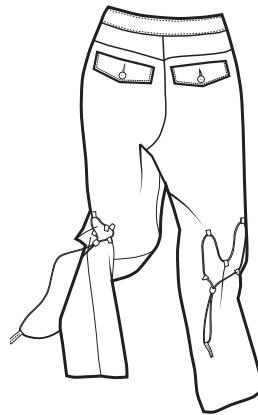
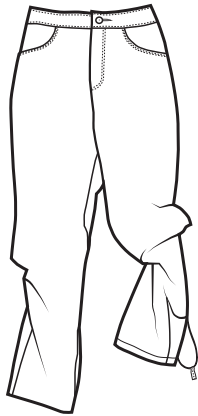
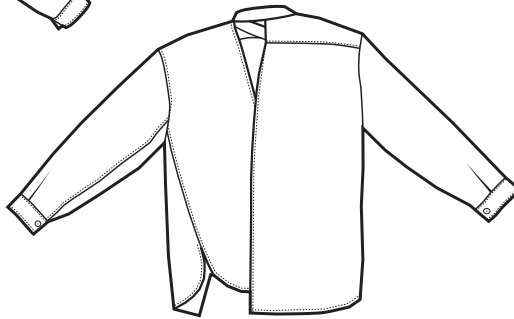
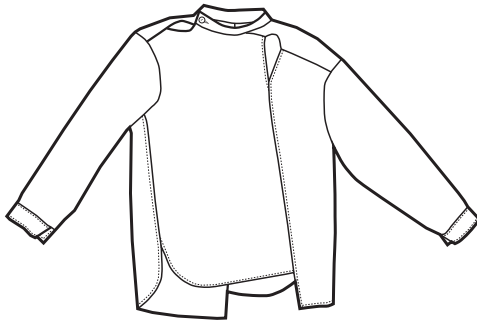
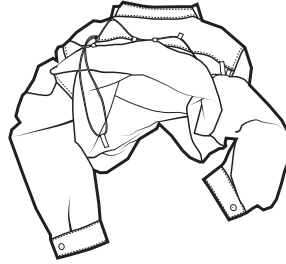


W O O B

COMPOSITION WITH
NKUMBU, 2016

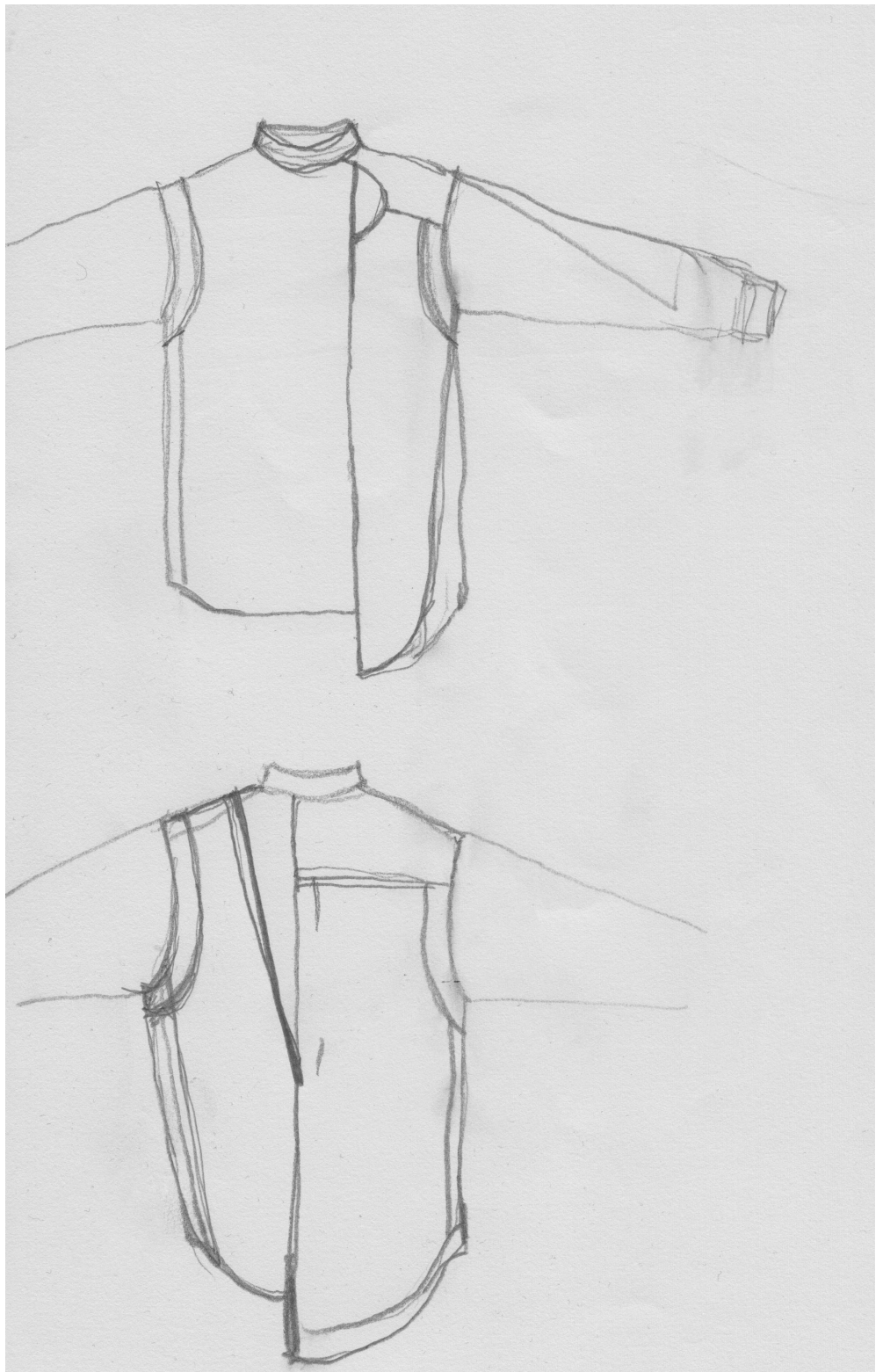
MADE IN FINLAND

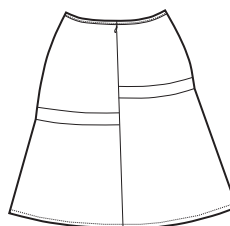
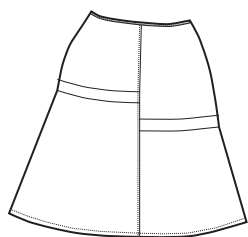
100% NYLON
MACHINE WASH OR WASH CLEAN.
DO NOT TUMBLE DRY.
COOL IRON.





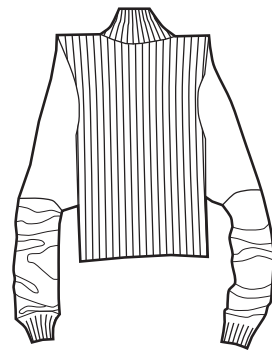
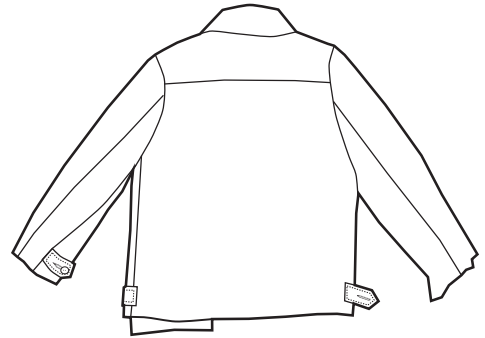








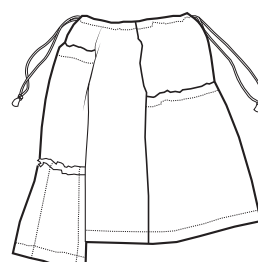
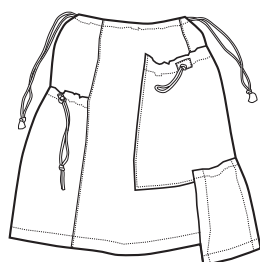
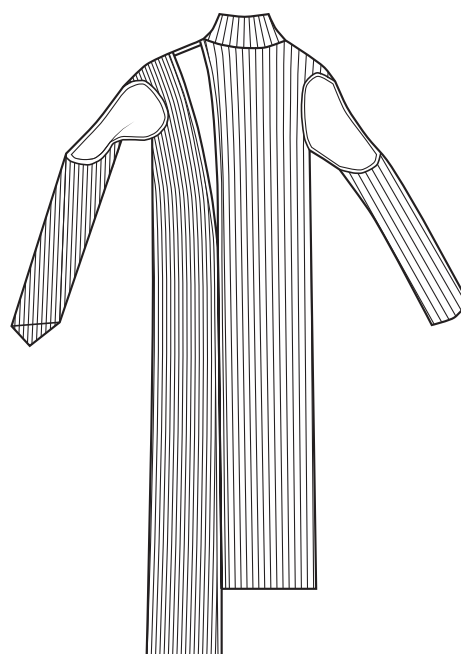
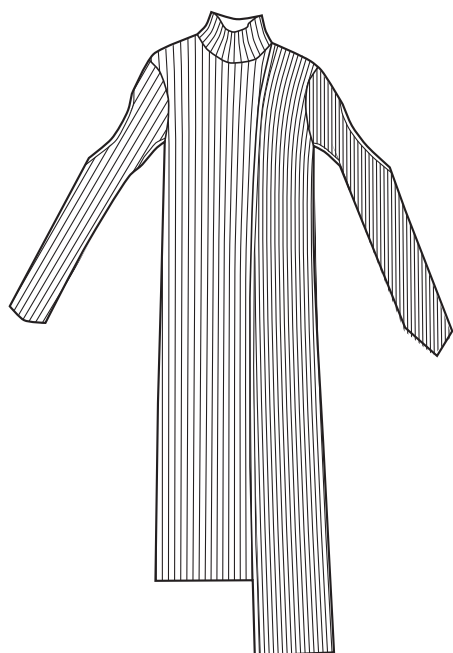


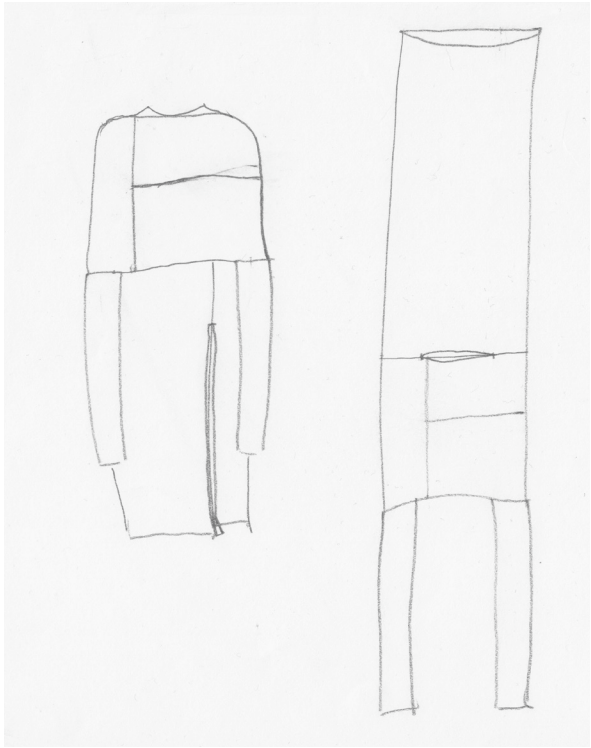
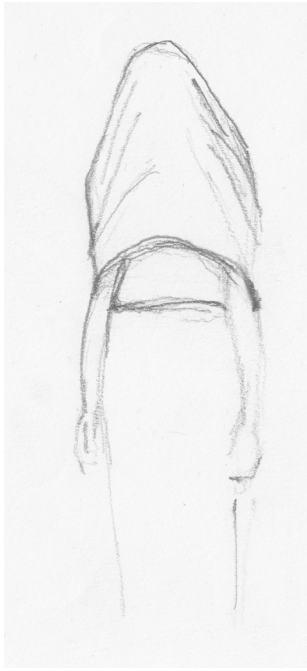
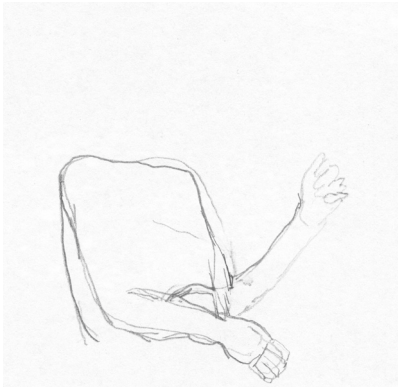














5. Conclusions

I believe I have achieved what I set out to do with this thesis. I was able to explore and develop the method of draping with a moving subject to the extent that I can identify the benefits and challenges of it as a design process, both for my own progression and also for others who would like to try working in this way. I was able to create a fashion collection, using this process to inform the design. There are clear elements from the process which are evident in the final garments, though they are not exact replicas of the moment they reference.

Since my main challenge was in translating the generated data, the main improvement would be to narrow the amount of data generated in the beginning. One or two draping sessions with one person is easily enough to generate inspiration, ideas and first prototypes for a whole collection. Of course it took some practice for me to familiarise myself with the approach, and for the purpose of my research I was curious to explore it with a variety of subjects before settling on ideas. However, for further use, I would stick to less sessions and narrow down the kind of items used a lot more.

I found that there is value in using a variety of documentation techniques. Taking photos and having physical prototypes was the most immediate and practical way to reference back to the compositions that occurred, but also after watching through all of the video footage, so many new ideas became clear to me, which I had earlier missed. Although each session by nature is going to unfold differently, once I knew better how to conduct them in terms of directions and documentation, it was quite efficient as a design process. I found it very inspiring and stimulating and there definitely came ideas out of it that I would not have come up with otherwise.

6. Discussion

Going forward, I could see this method being applied in more commercial ways, by involving the actual end users as the moving subjects. The consumer or consumers in general could be involved in the formation of their own garment, by taking part as the subject in the live draping design process, forming compositions which are previously unknown to both themselves and the designer. Although, if the subject has an agenda in mind of how they would like their garment to be, it could restrict the unexpectedness of the outcome. It would also be interesting to explore any technologies that could make the translation from data to product more seamless, for example some kind of combination of motion capture and body and material mapping software which could automatically inform what kind of pattern is required to recreate the compositions that occur. Or which could itself suggest options for design translations based on those occurring compositions.

My own next steps would be to apply the method to a collection when I use the data more directly in the outcomes, so there is less designing in between, and the outcomes more obviously link back to the composition from which they derived. I think some of the serendipitous, haphazard feeling I was hoping would remain in the garments was lost when I replaced materials, colours and made adjustments with the forms, for the sake of visual consistency in the fashion collection. Even if the result was less wearable, less coherent, I think I may have played it a bit too safe with my interpretations of those compositions. I would like to create new work, building on this one, where a series of prototypes that come directly from the sessions are the final outcome - even if they are just assembled

in a temporary way, with pegs or pins, this would be the truest representation of the occurrences in the process.

There are also more specific aspects of the sessions I would like to explore further, for example, conducting a session in total silence and communicating through action alone, not using any existing clothes in the process, only plain uncut fabrics, or draping the same set of objects in the same space but with different people, so that the only variable is the subject. I would also like to conduct sessions by observing people in their natural environments, without pre-conceiving the ingredients or the environment myself. The element of chance will increase but it may also somewhat restrict the scope of the interactions that occur, they may be too ordinary and routine, but it is impossible to know without trying.

There was never a plan. I'm not really good at setting an agenda. I much prefer to go with the day to day flow. Wonderful things happen when they're not planned. I like having a certain sense of chaos around me. Let it just happen. Then it surprises me.
(Mark Borthwick, 2009)



Draping session with Laura in a dynamic environment, 2015.

Photo by Jeanne Hendrey.

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